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ESSAY

ON

FIRST PRINCIPLES.

BY THE VERY REV.

JOHN CANON WALKER.

LONDON:

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

1868.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE FOLLOWING ESSAY on First Principles is shown by its very title to be metaphysical. Every science indeed has its first principles, but then they are the principles of that particular science. First Principles, absolutely so called, must belong to a science which precedes the subdivision of sciences, and which contains objects and laws which it distributes to all other branches of learning. By First Principles are here meant not only those axioms and elementary propositions, which naturally approve themselves to all, such as the principle of contradiction in speculation, and the maxim that good is to be done and evil avoided in practice, which indeed form a special subject of the following consideration; but by First Principles in their wider sense, are here understood the whole foundations and sources of Truth, whether they consist in the existence of faculties, or in the operations of simple apprehension, judgments, and deductions. The proper end however of this essay is to show what

foundations of truth are to be accepted instead of the postulates of Ontology and Idealism. The author felt that it was not sufficient to assail tenets which have prevailed for a considerable period, though one should place oneself under the shelter of decisions and warnings from Rome itself. Truth is something more than the denial of error. And it is evidently still a desideratum amongst us to have presented an exposition of the Principles of Knowledge, which shall satisfy the claims of a spiritual soul, without trespassing into transcendentalism. Indeed, it is a just boast of the Catholic Church, and a consolation to her reflecting members, that she ever seeks to build up the edifice of thought and doctrine, so as even to seem at times to forget the errors which she has once repudiated. These errors are, it is true, very often the occasion of her outward progress in wisdom, and she reaps a real good from the evils which are permitted by her divine Founder. But it is sufficient to open the works of the schoolmen to be assured that they were more desirous to construct than to destroy. In this point of view the Church has suffered loss, when her writers and teachers turned more to the historic and authoritative foundations of truth, than to its intrinsic reasons, analogies and aims; although she has undoubtedly gained in other and important

respects. At first the younger methods, as with Petavius, inherited a rich stock of principles and dogmatic truth to support and vivify their elaborate and critical illustrations; but by degrees the substance began to subside, and the most meagre ground-work of reason served the purposes of varied erudition; nay, what has been very prejudicial to truth, a dangerous eclecticism of different principles of philosophy has been adopted for the uses of dogma, as if philosophy were an alien without any definite character, intended only to meet the accidental wants of the theological disputant; till at last new and foreign principles and processes of reasoning have on all sides forced an entrance into the domain of dogma; and the Church seemed, as some of late have too crudely and absolutely stated, to be left without a philosophy.

The desire to see re-established the true and more profound principles and deductions of the Schools, which are the representative of the science of the Church, as the Fathers are of its tradition and warfare, without any disavowal of the important services of the various branches of sacred and secular learning, which have in recent times been pursued in the interests of religion, has been a chief cause why an attempt has been made in the following Essay to delineate a few fundamental

points of the scholastic philosophy as a substitute for the current views of Ontologism and Idealism. To facilitate the perception of this purpose, a summary of the chief subjects which are treated in the subsequent pages will be advantageously placed in this introduction. Without any strict enumeration of the points discussed, it may be said that they readily fall under the twelve following heads.

1. Whereas the Essence of God is not known intuitively and directly by man in the present state, the Existence and Nature of God become known from the effects of His action in the world, and by means of mental abstraction.

2. Not only is the Essence of God not known directly, but the eternal reasons of God or the divine ideas of created things are not the object of intuitive vision. At the same time the similitude of them is presented to the light of natural reason, which is made after His image, through the influence of the works of His hand.

3. Accordingly there are two orders of Truth regarding the same material objects, Increate Truth and created truth. The formal object of the two is not the same, but in the latter it is analogous to that of the former. Nor is the mode of truth the same; in the one it is eternal, necessary, infinite; in the latter it is contingent, conditioned, proportional.

4. Truth is explained to be a relation of an object to an intellect, or the adequation of the intellect and the object, and to be primarily in the intellect, and secondarily in things, whence arises the distinction of formal and metaphysical truth.

5. To show that no properties of creatures, not even entity itself, are univocal with the nature and attributes of God, the Aristotelic distinction of univocal and equivocal is explained. The analogous is placed under the genus equivocal, as being the same as non-univocal ; and it is here premised that though not all philosophers place the analogous under the equivocal, yet all that have a claim to be heard, must place it under the non-univocal, and make it a distinct class from the univocal.

6. Truth being both speculative and practical, it is shown that not only is created speculative truth non-univocal with the Increate Truth, but that practical truth which tends to good is equally distinct; and consequently that the Eternal Law is not identical with the Natural Law, but is its exemplar and signet.

7. The manner in which knowledge is obtained requiring elucidation, it is maintained that in man knowledge is not innate or ordinarily infused, but that the first ideas are acquired through the senses,

which are the first medium of knowledge; and that no truth, however exalted and immaterial, is independent of the senses in the first instance, though indefinitely raised above them by abstraction.

8. It is a consideration of radical importance that knowledge is communicated to man from without, and that things are the measure of his intellect; and although there is always an immanent action of his faculties, yet knowledge is received into his possible or passive intellect by the influence of what is without.

9. As the senses present what is singular and concrete, and the Intellect what is universal and abstract, the first perception of the intellect is *ens in materia*, or the quiddity of a material thing known originally to the sense. For neither is God nor Self the *primum cognitum*.

10. Consequently those axioms which are called First Principles are secondary to the apprehension of *Ens*, since they are judgments, which are operations of the mind subsequent to apprehensions; and since they involve the previous knowledge of the terms which compose the propositions.

11. First Principles therefore like the apprehension of *Ens* are derived from the senses, which cannot indeed supply the principles themselves, but yet furnish the materials for the principles.

12. The Habit of First Principles or *Noûs* is therefore not a receptacle of pre-existing truths or latent actualities, but is a power or virtue to seize readily the relations of ideas, whether they be speculative or practical, and to locate and retain them.

ESSAY

ON

FIRST PRINCIPLES.

IF we follow St. Thomas and the Peripatetic school, we must acknowledge, and we must profess, as a fundamental principle of philosophy, that the intellect of man, in this state of the world, has no direct and intuitive knowledge of God, and that, in reference to those beings which are the most manifest to nature, it is, as Aristotle says, like the eye of a bat with regard to the light of day.¹ No one can see God here below, unless by extraordinary gift, as in extasy, except in a glass which dimly reflects his essence and attributes. This vision is said by St. Paul to be in an enigma, or obscure representation.² For we only see God in the effects

¹ "Ὡςπερ γὰρ καὶ τὰ τῶν νυκτερίδων ὄμματα πρὸς τὸ φέγγος ἔχει τὸ μεθ' ἡμέραν, οὕτω καὶ τῆς ἡμετέρας ψυχῆς ὁ νοῦς πρὸς τὰ τῇ φύσει φανερώτατα πάντων. Metaph. I. b. 1. Anal. Post. i. 2. Conf. St. Th. contra Gent. i. 3. Arist. opposes what is manifest to nature or *per se*, to what is manifest *quoad nos*. So St. Th. Sum. I. ii. 1.

² 1 Cor. xiii. See à Lapid. in loc. St. Th. contr. Gen. i. 11, and i. 30, 31.

of his power and other attributes. And though St. John Damascene, an eminent Peripatetic, says, as quoted by St. Thomas: ‘Omnibus cognitio existendi Deum naturaliter est inserta,’¹ yet we must understand hereby, with the Angelic Doctor, that confused knowledge which knows the effects but does not know directly the cause, or that natural aspiration which seeks for happiness, to be found only in God, but not known as yet to reside in Him. He observes that to know that a man is approaching, yet not to know that he who approaches is Peter, is not to know Peter, though the man be in reality Peter. And the reason which he assigns why God is not the first known to us, is that we cannot apprehend the essence of the Increate Substance, nor even that of created immaterial substances. It is therefore through the creatures that we ascend to the knowledge of God, as St. Paul also teaches: ‘The invisible things of him are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made.’²

We know God then by what is called abstractive knowledge, and not by intuitive knowledge. The explanation of this distinction is given with sufficient clearness by Durandus in a passage quoted in a note of Hamilton’s *Metaphysic*:³ ‘Cognitio intuitiva, illa quæ immediate tendit ad rem sibi

¹ De Fid. Orth. i. 1 et 3 apud Summ. I. ii. 1.

² Rom. i. 20. Summ. I. lxxxviii. 3.

³ Vol. ii. p. 71. Durand. in Sent. Prologus, qu. 3, § 6.

præsentem objective secundum ejus actualem existentiam; sicut cum video colorem existentem in pariete, vel rosam quam in manu teneo. *Abstractiva* dicitur omnis cognitio quæ habetur de re non sic realiter præsentem in ratione objecti immediate cogniti. . . Actus sensuum exteriorum sunt *intuitivi* propter immediatum ordinem ad objecta sua.' Intuitive knowledge then is immediate, abstractive is mediate; we know the object through the medium of another object. Thus we know God through the medium of his creatures, his effects; and immaterial though He be in the highest sense, yet we know Him through material things. 'Primum quod a nobis intelligitur secundum statum præsentis vitæ est *quidditas rei materialis*, quæ est nostri intellectûs objectum, ut multoties supra dictum est.'¹ These are the words of St. Thomas. The procedure of abstraction which leads to the knowledge of God from 'the things that are made,' is by him reduced to three considerations. We learn to know God as Cause and First Cause; we arrive at the idea of an excellence exceeding all that is known, which is called a knowledge of Him *per excessum*; and we remove every imperfection to obtain the conception which we are capable of forming of his Nature. This is described as a knowledge *per remotionem*.²

This doctrine is manifestly opposed to Ontologism and the vision of all things in God. As

¹ Sum. I. lxxxviii. 3.

² Sum. I. lxxx. 4 ad 3

God is not known directly, so we do not know other beings by seeing them in Him as known directly to us. This is not to say that we do not know them because God is the cause of them, or because God causes them to be visible to us; for our knowledge of them is indeed thus dependent upon Him. ‘*Nam Deus est quidem in quo omnia cognoscuntur, non ita quod alia non cognoscantur nisi eo cognito, sicut in principiis per se notis accedit, sed quia per ejus influentiam omnis causatur in nobis cognitio.*’¹ It is true, indeed, that in God ‘we live, and we move, and we are,’² and the like may be said of other creatures. Yet it does not follow that we know either ourselves or them by knowing Him; on the contrary, we know them first, and through them we know Him. As was before observed, formal knowledge is not only to know that thing which we enquire after, but it is to know it precisely as that which we seek. Thus a brute beast may be said to know a rational being in man materially, but not formally, because it does not apprehend the characteristic of his being, his rationality, except perhaps confusedly as something superior to the principles of its own nature. Our Saviour’s words to St. Philip are in point: ‘Have I been so long a time with you, and have you not known me?’³ So also it may be said that the effects of God’s presence are ever before and with us, so that we cannot help knowing what

¹ Contra Gent. i. 11. ² Acts xvii. 28. ³ St. John xiv. 9.

really pertains to Him, and yet we are unable to know Him as He is, though we apprehend Him in a shadow.

No student of St. Thomas can fail to recognise the doctrine just described, as that which he not only insinuates, but everywhere inculcates. Yet the clearest expositions are sometimes obscured by the comparison of other statements apparently not easily reconcilable with the former. The law of contradiction makes it impossible to conceive a doctor like the Angel of the Schools holding two conflicting theories. Thus we are led to enquire which of the two classes of statement must be brought into harmony with the other, which is the stable principle.

Such an apparent contradiction has been seen by some not very familiar with the writings of St. Thomas in his explanation of the verse of the 4th Psalm: 'Signatum est super nos lumen vultûs tui;' and in the words quoted by him from St. John i. 9: 'Est lux vera quæ illuminat omnem hominem venientem in hunc mundum.'¹ With these we may compare such words as the following: 'Verum est quod iudicium et efficacia hujus cognitionis . . . competit nobis secundum derivationem luminis intellectûs nostri a veritate divinâ in quâ rationes omnium rerum continentur.'² Indeed there are many passages in which he speaks of the light of our reason as a participation or

¹ Sum. I. lxxxviii. 3.

² Sum. I. lxxxvi. 1.

derivation or impression of the divine light and reason. Thus: 'In luce primæ veritatis omnia intelligimus et judicamus, inquantum ipsum lumen intellectûs nostri, sive naturale, sive gratuitum, nihil aliud est quam impressio veritatis primæ.'¹

With regard to all such language as the preceding, we have one, but adequate answer. St. Thomas speaks of a similitude of our intellect with the divine reason, and not of any identity of light; he speaks of an action of God on our understandings, and not of a direct vision of God on our part. Many have been misled by the expression *participation*, from the decay of scholastic phraseology. It has been confounded with the *μετέξις* of Plato, as if there were a direct communication of the eternal ideas and light of God. But St. Thomas uses the term in the sense of an imitation by analogy and by effects, not as if there were anything univocal in God and his creatures. 'Esse participatum *finitur* ad capacitatem participantis.' . . . 'Participatur a rebus, non sicut pars, sed secundum diffusionem processionis ipsius.'² The procession of which he speaks is *ad extra*, and consequently by creation. But lest it be thought that though he is not divisible, yet there emanate from God his very attributes, St. Thomas observes, 'Si igitur sit aliquid agens quod non in genere contineatur, (and this is God,) *effectus* ejus adhuc magis remote accedet ad similitudinem formæ

¹ Sum. I. lxxxviii. 3.

² Sum. I. lxxv. 5.

agentis, non tamen ita quod participet similitudinem formæ agentis *secundum eandem rationem speciei aut generis, sed secundum aliqualem analogiam*, sicut ipsum esse est commune omnibus. Et *hoc modo* illa quæ sunt a Deo, *assimilantur ei*, in quantum sunt entia, ut primo et universali principio totius esse.¹ And a little after, he says: 'Non dicitur esse similitudo creaturæ ad Deum propter communicationem in formâ secundum eandem rationem generis et speciei, sed *secundum analogiam tantum*, prout scilicet Deus est ens per essentiam, et alia *per participationem*.' This important limitation must be understood also of the expression *emanation* used by St. Thomas, which has not the modern pantheistic signification, it need not be said, but involves always the idea of action and causation, as in all the processions of the Divine Being *ad extra*, that is, the idea of creation and consequent effects. What is said of the *participation* of entity by creatures from God, applies to his attributes as well as to his essence. Nothing is univocal in any creature, however exalted, all is analogous. Univocal is the translation of the term *συνώνυμος* in Aristotle, as at the beginning of his *Categories*, where he gives the following definition of the expression: 'Those things are called univocal, of which both the name is common, and the definition of the essence is the same.' Thus animal is an univocal designation of a man and a beast.

¹ Sum. I. iv. 3.

Opposed to univocal is equivocal (*ἑμάνυμος*) or non-univocal. And 'those things are called equivocal,' he says, 'of which the name alone is common, whereas the definition of the essence is different.' Thus again animal used to designate a man, and also the portrait of him, is taken in an equivocal sense. But equivocals are subdivided into those which are *a consilio*, and those which are *casu*. The first are called *analogous*, because they bear a resemblance to the original, and thus have an intention marked upon them. The others are merely fortuitous, and imply no other connexion than that of name.¹ When we say therefore that not only the being communicated to creatures by God, but also all qualities of wisdom, goodness, justice, beauty, force and the like, are all non-univocal or equivocal, we yet regard them as analogous and similar under their own species or genus to the attributions of God, who is aloof from all species and genus. Accordingly no reason or intelligence which man has by participation from God, can be the very Reason and Intelligence of God. But it is a participation by analogy and imitation of his attribute, and an impression stamped upon a soul by a *forma agente*, and which is not *secundum eandem rationem generis et speciei*. In this sense is to be understood the language of the Psalmist, 'Signatum est super nos lumen vultûs tui.' The signation is an impression from an agent, and the seal is an *effect*, and is *contracted*

¹ See Conimbricenses, and Toletus, in loco.

(*finitur*) according to the capacity of the recipient. But let us leave St. Thomas to explain the text in his own words. '*In sole videntur ea quæ videntur per solem; et sic necesse est dicere, quod anima humana omnia cognoscat in rationibus æternis per quarum participationem omnia cognoscimus. Ipsum enim lumen intellectuale, quod est in nobis, nihil est aliud quam quædam participata similitudo luminis increati, in quo continentur rationes æternæ. Unde in Ps. iv. 6 dicitur, "multi dicunt, Quis ostendit nobis bona?" Cui quæstioni Psalmista respondet dicens, "Signatum est super nos lumen vultûs tui, Domine;" quasi dicat: Per ipsam sigillationem divini luminis in nobis omnia demonstrantur. Quia tamen præter lumen intellectuale in nobis exiguntur species intelligibiles a rebus acceptæ ad scientiam de rebus materialibus habendam, ideo non per solam participationem rationum æternarum de rebus materialibus notitiam habemus, sicut Platonici posuerunt, quod sola idearum participatio sufficit ad scientiam habendam.'* St. Thomas then shows from a quotation from St. Augustine's work de Trinitate iv. 6, that that great Father held the same doctrine with himself in opposition to the Platonists. Fonseca in his commentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle observes in reference to this very point, that St. Thomas was a *studiosissimus observator* of St. Augustine. We shall soon have occasion to record the judgment of that able

¹ Sum. I. lxxxiv. 5.

writer. What St. Thomas says of the acquisition of knowledge of material things, for which two things are necessary, a *participated similitude* of the increate light in our souls, and intelligible species derived from things, is equally applicable to the knowledge of immaterial things, since it is his constant doctrine that the latter proceeds from the former, and presupposes it, and is by no means infused, as we shall explain more articulately hereafter. In the meantime two passages will support our statement. ‘Incorporea quorum non sunt phantasmata cognoscuntur a nobis per comparationem ad corpora sensibilia quorum sunt phantasmata.’¹ ‘Cognitio Dei quæ ex mente humanâ accipi potest non excedit illud genus cognitionis *quod ex sensibilibus sumitur*, cum et *ipsa de seipsa* cognoscat quid est per hoc quod *naturas sensibilibus* intelligit.’²

It should then be noted that neither the light of our intellect, nor the reasons of things, are the same generally, specifically, or numerically with the intelligence of God or the eternal reasons of God. They are only similitudes and analogies thereof. ‘Hunc sensum confirmant verba Augustini³ qui dicit quod scientiarum spectamina videntur in divina veritate, sicut visibilia in *lumine solis*, quæ *constat non videri in ipso corpore solis, sed per lumen, quod est similitudo solaris claritatis*, in aëre et similibus corporibus relictâ.’⁴ Here the light by which

¹ Sum. I. lxxxiv. 7.

² Contra Gent. iii. 47.

³ Soliloq. i. 8.

⁴ Contra Gent. iii. 47.

we see is said not to be that of God, but a similitude of that light. Again the first principles of reason speculative and practical in us, which correspond to the eternal truths of God, are an image and not the same. ‘*Quædam sunt vera in quibus omnes homines concordant, sicut sunt prima principia intellectûs tam speculativi quam practici, secundum quod universaliter in mentibus hominum divinæ veritatis quasi quædam imago resultat.*’¹ Nor again even if the identical light of God’s science were communicated to us, would it in the view of St. Thomas be the object which we should behold; but only the medium by which, and not in which, objects would become conspicuous to us. He expressly explains *in sole* to mean *per solem*; and the figure employed requires such explanation. For, as he says, we do not look at the sun itself to behold what is apparent through the light of the sun. The sun is often invisible to us, though it renders things visible. To see things in God Himself as in a glass, is a knowledge reserved for the blessed. For though as St. Paul says, ‘We see now through a glass,’² that glass is not the face of God, but a reflection of his glory in his effects; and therefore St. Paul continues, ‘in an obscure manner; but then face to face,’ that is, in heaven. ‘Now I know in part; but then I shall know even as I am known.’ Sir William Hamilton, though very different from St. Thomas in his system of

¹ Contra Gentes, iii. 47.

² 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

ideas, yet acknowledges this truth.¹ But to keep to our principal authority, the following words are well worth consideration. 'Aliquid in aliquo dicitur cognosci dupliciter. Uno modo sicut in *objecto cognito*, sicut aliquis videt in speculo ea quorum imagines in speculo resultant, et hoc modo anima in statu præsentis vitæ *non potest videre omnia in rationibus æternis*; sed sic in rationibus æternis cognoscunt omnia beati qui Deum vident et omnia in ipso.'² This knowledge of the blessed is indeed wonderful and incomprehensible; and so far from assisting the explanation of our present knowledge, is the attribution of the same to us, that it would darken all apprehension of nature by a recurrence to principles beyond all natural intelligence. Let us be content with that reflected light of truth which resides in our intelligent nature. 'In luce primæ veritatis omnia intelligimus et judicamus, in quantum ipsum lumen intellectûs nostri, sive naturale, sive gratuitum, nihil aliud est quam *quædam impressio veritatis primæ*. Unde cum ipsum lumen intellectûs nostri non se habeat ad intellectum nostrum sicut *quod* intelligitur, sed sicut *quo* intelligitur, multo minus Deus est *id quod* primo a nostro intellectu intelligitur.'³ This argument is based upon a principle different from that which Hamilton and Cartesians in general assume. For the Scotch philosopher maintains that the Ego is the first thing perceived, and every

¹ Vol. ii. p. 374. ² Sum. I. lxxxiv. 5. ³ Sum. I. lxxxviii. 3.

thing else as distinguished from the Ego, the Non-Ego. Still St. Thomas admits that the Ego is nearer to our knowledge than God—multo minus Deus, etc. We must cite again one unmistakeable passage to exclude the vision of all things in God, from his work *Contra Gentes*. ‘Deus est quidem in quo omnia cognoscuntur, *non ita tamen quod alia non cognoscantur nisi eo cognito*, sicut in principiis per se notis accidit, sed quia *per ejus influentiam* omnis causatur in nobis cognitio.’¹

The proofs which we have adduced from the principal teacher of the schools, that we do not see every thing in God, as if God were first known, but only as He is cause, and as the world without us and our own intellects reflect his Truth, have led us also to show that we do not participate univocally and directly in the *rationes æternæ Dei*. A more precise consideration however of this point is important both for itself and for the connected objects of interest to which it leads. The *rationes æternæ* of God are the ideas of God, which St. Thomas says it is necessary to assign to him.² St. Augustine, quoted by him, says,³ ‘*Ideæ sunt principales quædam formæ vel rationes rerum stabiles atque incommutabiles, quia ipsæ formatæ non sunt, ac per hoc æternæ ac semper eodem modo se habentes, quæ divina intelligentia continentur.*’ And St. Thomas himself says, ‘Deus intelligit

¹ *Contra Gentes*, i. 11.

² *Sum. I. xv. 1.*

³ *Lib. Qu. 9. xlv. a medio apud Sum. I. xv. 2.*

plures rationes proprias plurium rerum quæ sunt plures ideæ.’¹ But the ideas in God are nothing but his Essence, inasmuch as it is imitable by things. ‘Deus secundum essentiam suam est similitudo omnium rerum; unde idea in Deo nihil est aliud quam Dei essentia.’² In God, however, though there is but one Essence, yet there are many ideas; because these ideas are respects or relations in Himself of creatable or created things; nor yet are they real relations but those *rationis* or *intellectûs*. ‘Respectus multiplicantes ideas non sunt in rebus creatis sed in Deo, non tamen sunt reales respectus, sicut illi quibus distinguuntur personæ, sed respectus intellecti a Deo.’³ Liberatore seems correct in saying that it is the Intellect of God which takes them out of their fundamental state in his Essence, and gives them an actuality.⁴ They would not be dependent upon God at all, if his Essence were not the remote principle of their existence. The Essence of God is therefore the remote cause, his Intellect the proximate cause, of these ideas. But the order of succession is merely one *rationis*. Here again we see the kind of participation which creatures derive from God; it is that of imitation or similitude. ‘Potest cognosci non solum secundum quod in se est, sed secundum quod est *participabilis secundum aliquem modum*

¹ I. xv. 2.² I. xv. 1 ad 3.³ I. xv. 2 ad 4.⁴ Fonseca seems to say the same. Lib. iv. Metaph. ch. 2. qu. 6, § 12, p. 811.

similitudinis a creaturis. Unaquæque autem creatura habet *propriam speciem*, secundum quod aliquo modo *participat divinæ essentiæ similitudinem*.' Nor is this participation by similitude confined to rational creatures, but everything in its degree partakes of the likeness of God, though *antonomasticè* it is appropriated to intellectual beings.

Fonseca¹ gives abundant confirmation to the sense in which we have cited St. Thomas, even if his own words were not too plain to be mistaken. He says: '*Creaturæ eatenus dicuntur conformes intellectui divino, quatenus sunt quædam imitationes rationum earum quæ sunt in Mente Divina*, quod utique importat dependentiam ipsarum ab Intellectu Divino . . . Solutionem difficiliorem reddit D. Augustinus, qui docet, Veritatem non cognosci a nobis, nisi in rationibus æternis, quæ sunt in Mente Divina.' . . . Sed D. Thomas studiosissimus observator verborum Augustini nodum dissolvit ex iis quæ ille [Aug.] scribit in I. Soliloquiorum, cap. 8, quo loco docet: '*Veritates quæ in disciplinis traduntur, eo modo cognosci in Deo, æternisque rationibus, quo visibilia videntur in sole. Ait enim, I. viii. 5 (?) et iii. Contr. Gent. c. 47, et aliis plerisque locis, duobus modis aliquid cognosci in aliquo. Uno ut in objecto cognito: quo pacto videmus imaginem in speculo, atque hoc pacto non cognosci a nobis, dum hanc vitam*

¹ Loco cit. p. 809.

degimus, *veritatem rerum in illius rationibus æternis*, quemadmodum nec reliqua visibilia videmus in sole ipso, *quem directe aspicere non possumus*. Altero, ut in principio cognoscendi: atque hoc modo cognosci a nobis veritatem rerum creatarum in rationibus æternis, quatenus ejusmodi rationes participantur in nobis per lumen naturale, quo pacto dicimur cernere alia visibilia in sole, quia cernimus illa per lumen participatum a sole. Idque docet significasse divinum Vatem, cum Ps. iv. sibi ipsi quærenti: "Quis ostendit nobis bonum?" hunc in modum respondit: "Signatum est super nos lumen vultûs tui, Domine." Significavit enim his verbis veritatem omnem quæ ad quærendam salutem necessaria est, ipsa participatione divini luminis quod in mente nostra fulget, cognosci a nobis posse. Ita fit ut per principia naturaliter cognita rationes rerum investigemus, et per conformitatem earum cum ejusmodi rationibus, veritates, quæ naturaliter cognosci possunt, intelligamus, ac proinde per conformitatem cum rationibus æternis quæ sunt in Mente Divinâ.'

But it will perhaps be said that there are certain truths, which are of necessary, universal, infinite import. Such are mathematical truths, arithmetical proportions, principles of immutable morality and right. These must be eternal; they must be increate, and therefore can only be rationes æternæ in God. It is answered that these principles and reasons of things have a twofold aspect; so far as

they are the objects of the Divine Mind, and are laws that emanate from Himself, and have their existence by conformity to his intellect, they are indeed increate and eternal. But so far as they are perceptible and discoverable by created intellects, they are indeed certain, necessary, immutable, but not with that certainty, necessity, and immutability which belongs to the divine knowledge. They are in short created finite verities, verities even variable in the sense which we are going to explain. ‘*Rationes incommutabiles et sempiternæ alibi quam in Deo esse non possunt, quum solus Deus, secundum fidei doctrinam, sit sempiternus.*’¹ ‘*Si nullus intellectus esset æternus, nulla veritas esset æterna. Sed quia solus intellectus divinus est æternus, in ipso solo veritas æternitatem habet . . . ratio circuli, et duo et tria esse quinque, habent æternitatem in Mente Divina.*’² And with regard to the eternal law: ‘*Legem æternam nullus potest cognoscere secundum quod in seipsa est, nisi solus Deus et beati, qui Deum per essentiam vident.*’³ Is truth then manifold? it will be asked. Is truth subject to change? In one sense St. Thomas answers that truth is one, in another, that it is manifold. We must first understand correctly what is meant by truth in the schools. It is observable that truth is not formally the same thing as being. For though it is true that *Verum et*

¹ Contra Gent. iii. 47.

² Sum. I. xvi. 7.

³ Sum. I. II. xciii. 2.

Ens convertuntur, yet there is a notion included in *Verum* which is not in *Ens*; and that is its relation to a knowing mind. Truth has no existence, except as referable to an intelligence. So that if matter alone could exist, truth could not exist.¹ But this is a metaphysical impossibility. When then St. Augustine says: '*Veritatem esse quæ ostendit id quod est*,'² he is to be understood to say that entity is the foundation of truth, or the effect of truth. And this is better explained by his words, '*Verum est, quod ita se habet ut videtur cognitori, si velit possitque cognoscere*,'³ where a distinct mention is made of the relation to knowledge included in truth. This remark explains the reason of the definition of truth adopted in the schools from St. Thomas. '*Veritas est adæquatio intellectus et rei*,' or '*conformitas intellectus et rei*.'⁴ Formal truth then essentially consists in the relation of entity to intellect. Nay, it regards primarily and specially the intellect. '*Veritas per prius est in intellectu et per posterius in rebus*,'⁵ and again, '*Verum principaliter in intellectu; ens vero principaliter in rebus. Et hoc accidit propter*

¹ Cajetan in I. xvi. 6: '*Si nullus esset intellectus, nulla res vera . . . dici posset.*'

² De vera religione c. 36, apud Liberatore, vol. i. p. 97, ed. 1864, or Log. pars alt. cap. 1. art. 1.

³ Solil. lib. ii. and iii. n. 8, apud Liberat. Metaph. Gen. cap. i. art. 6, p. 287.

⁴ Sum. I. xvi. 2; I. xvi. 1.

⁵ Sum. I. xvi. 6.

hoc quod verum et ens differunt ratione."¹ It is impossible therefore to conceive truth without conceiving its relation to an intelligent being. As therefore there is an Increate Intelligence, and there are created intelligences, truth must relate to one or both. It cannot relate from all eternity to created Intelligences, since they have not existed from all eternity; nor even potentially, in such a way as to derive its character and name of Truth from a potential relation to them; since their existence is contingent, and God was free to create or not. Eternal truth can have therefore an intrinsic relation only to God. And thus his Essence is to his Intelligence his own increate Truth, and all created things have their intrinsic truth by being conformable to his Intelligence. But it is well remarked by St. Thomas, that truth in created things takes its measure from the ideas and knowledge of God; inasmuch as He is the Artificer who produces them according to the plan in his own Intellect. With regard to us on the contrary, the truth of things is rather the measure and cause of our knowledge, except in those cases in which our own intelligence becomes the artificer of invented or composed things. There are accordingly two orders of formal truth, that of the Increate Mind, and that of created and finite minds; and this is the reason why truth is not one, but is manifold. It is one when referred to

¹ I. xvi. 3.

God. It is manifold when referred to creatures. It is one again when referred to the entity of things, because this entity has an intrinsic relation to the Increate Intelligence. We do not therefore say, of course, that the essences of things, or the essential relations of things, mathematical truths, first principles of rectitude, speculative or practical, have any variation or multiplicity in their own nature as known to God, and as conformable to the ideas of God. But we maintain with St. Thomas that their relation to our intellects, who do not see everything in the immediate light of God, is of a created, finite, mutable nature; and that thus formal truth in us is not identical with what I may call the formal truth of the Divine Intellect, and the truth of things as related to God. And this gives occasion to distinguish with Cajetan, and after him with Suarez, both resting upon the teaching of St. Thomas, three orders of truth, that in *Re*, that in *Signo*, and that *Intellectu*.¹ With the second, which regards the expression or manifestation of Truth, we are not here concerned. With regard to the first, truth in things themselves, which is called metaphysical truth, this is a *denominatio ab extrinseco*, as Cajetan justly observes, since truth properly attaches to the intellect. It is extrinsic because it is a borrowed appellation from the truth of the Divine Intellect concerning the things, for though they are created

¹ Cajet. in Sum. I. xvi. 7.

things themselves, they are true according to increate truth in the Divine Mind. This increate truth therefore of created things is a derived appellation from the increate truth of the Divine Intelligence. 'Veræ autem,' says Cajetan, 'dicuntur extrinsecâ denominatione, ita quod nulla est in rebus *formaliter* veritas, sed imitative, seu adimpletivi respectu Intellectûs Divini, et causaliter respectu nostri intellectûs speculativi.' Metaphysical truth is then only a correlative expression of Divine Truth. And this is why St. Thomas says that the truth of two and three making five, which is a metaphysical truth, has an eternity in the Divine Mind.¹ To the same effect is the language of Fonseca.² 'Res omnes ideo dicuntur veræ, quia sunt conformes alicui intellectui. Non sunt autem veræ veritate eâ de quâ loquimur (i.e. metaphysical), quia sunt conformes intellectui *creato* . . . quia intellectus creatus, cum decipi possit, veritatis regula esse non potest. Deinde quia unde res primum habent, ut sint, inde primum habent, ut veræ sint; cum igitur nulla res primo habeat ab intellectu creato, ut sit, efficitur, ut non primo habeat ex eo, ut sit vera . . . Igitur nulla res est primo vera, nisi quatenus est conformis alicui intellectui æterno, qui solus est divinus.'

It will now be better seen that truth is only one with respect to God and through Him with respect to things themselves; but that it is manifold when

¹ Sum. I. xvi. 7.

² p. 804.

referred to created intellects. ‘Quodammodo *una* est veritas, quâ omnia sunt vera; et quodammodo *non.*’ ‘In multis intellectibus *creatis* sunt *multæ* veritates, et in uno et eodem intellectu secundum plura. Unde dicit glossa super illud Ps. xi. (est autem glossa Augustini in istum Psalm.): “Diminutæ sunt veritates a filiis hominum, quod, sicut ab una facie hominis resultant plures similitudines in speculo, sic ab una veritate divinâ resultant plures veritates.”¹ Hence flows the distinction, well known in terms at least, of *Veritas Increata*, and *Veritas Creata*, which, it is conceived, are not uncommonly taken to represent the objects themselves, as that God Himself is *Veritas Increata*, and creatures are *Veritas Creata*. But in reality they are two different relations of object and subject, the relation of an object with the *Increate Intellect*, and the relation of an object with a *Created Intellect*. Consequently even created things, as before observed, can enter into the relation of *veritas increata*.

The same explanation of truth shows that created truth can also be mutable. As it essentially involves a relation of things to a created intellect, it follows the contingency and mutability of that intellect. A relation involves two terms, and a change in either extreme, changes the relation itself. Thus, while the metaphysical truth of things remains the same, because of its conformity with the *Divine Intellect*, formal created truth is

¹ I. xvi. 6, parenthesis of De Rubeis apparently.

subject to variation from its dependence upon a changeable intelligence. 'Veritas Divini Intellectûs est immutabilis; veritas autem intellectûs nostri mutabilis est, non quod ipsa sit subjectum mutationis, sed in quantum intellectus noster mutatur de veritate in falsitatem. . . Veritas in hoc consistit, quod habeat conformitatem ad res intellectas; quæ quidem conformitas variari potest dupliciter, sicut et quælibet alia similitudo ex mutatione alterius extremi.'¹ But it will be urged that this view of truth merely exhibits what every one knows, that the knowledge of created intellects is not eternal, or incapable of diminution and increase; whereas truth is not knowledge, but a rule of knowledge. It is answered that though truth is not knowledge, yet it essentially involves a relation to knowledge, and therefore stands or falls with knowledge. In the second place not all truth is a rule of knowledge, for formal created truth is properly the result or effect of knowledge, a relation emerging directly from the conformity of the intellect with things.² Metaphysical truth or divine truth is indeed the rule and measure, but its application is contingent, and may fail to be applied at all. But the objection, were it valid against truth, yet does not much affect our principal scope; for whether knowledge or truth be the proper expression, St. Thomas by his language concerning the multiplicity, createdness,

¹ I. xvi. 8.

² We are not speaking of created truth as a rule to subordinate truths, first principles to their consequences, etc.

mutability of truth sufficiently shows that our knowledge does not partake univocally of the divine knowledge or truth, which only is one, is increate and immutable. 'Rationes incommutabiles et sempiternæ alibi quam in Deo esse non possunt, quum solus Deus, secundum fidei doctrinam, sit sempiternus.'¹

But is not truth something indivisible? Can there be two indivisibles, or more or less indivisible? The human mind is either conformable to the reality of things or it is not. There is no medium. Its conformity with that reality is something indivisible, and as such it must be the same conformity that there is between that reality and God's mind. Our intellect and the intellect of God must thus meet in one indivisible object, truth. This difficulty which presents itself to our minds as at first sight strong and specious, yet vanishes from various considerations. If we compare the indivisibility of human and created truth with the indivisibility of divine increate truth, it is affirmed that indivisibility is not uniform. Indivisibility or *carentia divisionis* is the definition of unity. But unity like verity is a passion or attribute of entity. When then entity is predicated in equivocal sense, and is applicable properly to one, and only analogously to another, its properties, so called transcendental, unity, verity, goodness, are also applicable in a secondary and non-univocal sense. The entity therefore of God being altogether different from

¹. Contra Gentes, iii. 47.

that of his creatures, his truth, his unity, his goodness is different ; and consequently the unity of his intellection. For his ideas and his intellection are only his own Essence, according as things are referable to it. Unity therefore and indivisibility vary in different orders of beings, and follow the nature of their respective orders. Consequently when the human mind enters into conformity with the reality of things, though this is an indivisible conformity in its own sphere, yet being inadequate to the complete essence of things and their relation to the rest of the universe and to the eternal ideas of God, it has an unity or indivisibility altogether different from that of the intellection of God in which these things are adequately represented.

But it is to be remarked that even while the nature of the Intelligence is the same, yet truth may involve degrees and variability. For the whole essence of truth is not contained in indivisibility, which is a negative attribute, but principally requires an information of the intellect corresponding to the nature of things, which is something positive.¹ Now this information is

¹ Suarez De Fide, Disp. 6, sect. 3 §8, quoted by Liberatore, vol. i. p. 306, says, 'Licet certitudo *per privationem* explicetur, quam significat infallibilitas, nihilominus *non consistit formaliter in privatione, sed in positivâ perfectione*, quæ potest esse major et minor juxta excellentiam actûs et causarum ejus : sicut substantia immaterialis magis vel minus perfecta quoad spiritualitatem esse potest, licet privatio materiæ, quæ nomine immaterialis substantiæ significatur in omnibus æqualis esse videatur.'

subject to great varieties. One intellect penetrates farther than another into the reality of things; another fails to see anything; the same mind has at different times a different realisation of things. And as St. Thomas observes, if the thing itself be of a changeable nature, the relation of the intellect to it is affected by the extrinsic change of the things. '*Uno modo variatur veritas ex parte intellectûs, ex eo quod de re eodem modo se habente aliquis aliam opinionem accipit. Alio modo, si opinione eadem manente, res mutetur. Et utroque modo fit mutatio de vero in falsum. Si ergo sit aliquis intellectus in quo non possit esse alternatio opinionum, vel cujus acceptionem non potest subterfugere res aliqua, in eo est immutabilis veritas: talis autem est Intellectus Divinus.*'¹ The observations which Liberatore after Suarez makes concerning the degrees of certainty, are also applicable to the degrees of human truth. He admits that all created certainty is uniform in the absence of doubt; but that certainty varies in degree according to the perfection of the grounds on which it is based. The same may be said of truth in the human mind, which, though in its lowest stages it is in itself devoid of falsity, yet in its positive qualities may be capable of indefinite perfection. The light of a truth may be more vivid; the causes of a truth may be more intelligible; the extension of a truth more appreciable; and the assemblage of

¹ Sum. I. xvi. 8.

truths and their indefinite relations more perceptible. Yet no perfection of knowledge which we can attain to can equal the adequation or conformity of things with the Divine Intellect. Our intellect being essentially different, our apprehension must ever be essentially different, unless we have an immediate communication of the Divine Intelligence and Reason. Fonseca well says,¹ 'Si conceptus et res omnino adæquantur per omnimodam similitudinem, ut in Deo, tunc ex utrâque parte consequitur (veritas); si autem non adæquantur omnino, sed alterum pendet ex altero, in solo eo consequitur quod ex altero pendet. . . Itaque cum non datur perfecta adæquatio, semper veritas est relatio mensurati ad mensuram.' By this last phrase is meant that the truth follows precisely the regulation of the intellect (mensurati) by the things (mensura), which is of various degrees. When it is asked, therefore, whether those truths which we really possess are identical with the truths in God about the same object, it is answered that they are not, but they are reflected truths from his immutable truth. The subject of the truth is different, one is the Divine Mind, the other is a finite intelligence. The operation is different, one is eternal, the other in time; and the eternal is not communicated univocally and intuitively to the temporal. The object contemplated is also different, or rather the idea conceived of the object, the

¹ p. 801, *ibid.*

formal object of the intellection. The one is the very essence of things, the other is an image of that essence. What God sees intuitively, we see in a similitude, called thence by the schools a species.¹ Everything appears to our intellect in a species. Hence the species *intelligibiles* as well as the *species sensibiles* by which all our information is obtained. And though we do not contemplate the image, as distinct from the thing, but we see the thing through the image, yet it is as it were the imaged existence of the thing which is the measure of our knowledge, since the thing is not in us in its physical state, but as it is said, in its intelligible or represented state. But this subject will return. For the present then let it suffice to say that the formal object of our knowledge is not the same with that of God, although there is one thing which at the same time produces our knowledge and corresponds to the knowledge of God. The material object or extrinsic object is in common, but the mode in which we view it is not that of God. And this constitutes the separation between increate and created truth. But notwithstanding this great difference created truth is similar to the increate, and by way of analogy is conformable to the divine knowledge, and indeed is an irradiation from the

¹ 'In Mente enim Divina alia est ratio solis, cui conformatur sol, alia conceptus humani representantis solem, cui hujusmodi conceptus conformatur. Illa enim est ratio essendi solis; hæc ratio representandi solem,' &c.—*Fonseca*, p. 807, *ibid*.

fountain of light, a finite participation of an infinite Intellection. We cannot demand more without transferring the state of the blessed to the present state of souls, or without bordering on Pantheism. For it would be impossible to see the *rationes æternæ* intuitively, and not to see God also intuitively, since his Rationes are Himself. We are limited therefore to the effects of his science, and through these effects we mount with greater or less perspicuity to the laws on which they are formed, and the Being from whom they emanate.

There is still an important objection which requires to be obviated. From what has been said of the mutability of truth in created intellects, according to the alleged interpretation of the Psalmist's words,¹ 'Diminutæ sunt veritates a filiis hominum,' will it not appear that the notorious sophism of Protagoras, so much reprehended by Aristotle, and which led to his condemnation by the Athenian Republic, receives some justification? For he said that that was true which so appeared to any one;² and he had learnt this tenet from Democritus the founder of the Epicurean sect. But if as we have shown truth varies according to the capacity of the intellect, it cannot have any intrinsic stability, it may be urged, but must receive its seal from

¹ The argument rests not upon the text of Scripture, but its interpretation.

² See the whole ch. 5 of the 3rd of the Metaphysics, where the certainty of objective truth is forcibly treated. Comp. also Brewer's Introd. to b. ii. Ethics.

different minds, whereby as many truths will be occasioned as there are many minds; and as these are often opposed to each other, two contradictories will come to be true at the same time. But a little attention will show that the scepticism of Protagoras has no foundation in St. Thomas. Nay, St. Thomas himself draws attention to the error of those ancient philosophers to whom Aristotle refers, and who affirmed 'Omne quod videtur esse verum;' ¹ and he repudiates it. Protagoras then, with others, made the human intellect the measure of things, and thus the source of all truth. St. Thomas on the contrary makes things the measure of the human intellect, and thus the cause of truth in man. Protagoras transferred to man what is the incommunicable attribute of God, to be the source of truth; and this he did from not recognising a God. 'Antiqui philosophi,' says St. Thomas, 'species rerum naturalium non procedere ab aliquo intellectu, sed eas provenire a casu, et quia considerabant quod verum importat comparationem ad intellectum, cogeantur veritatem rerum constituere in ordine ad intellectum nostrum. . . Quæ quidem inconvenientia non accidunt, si ponamus veritatem rerum consistere in comparatione ad intellectum divinum.'² This difference of starting-point reverses the whole appearance of resemblance between St. Thomas and those ancients. The metaphysical truth of things, which consists not in their conformity to

¹ Sum. I. xvi. 1.

² Sum. I. xvi. 1.

our intellect, but in their conformity to the intellect of God, from which they proceed, and the rationes æternæ of which are the exemplar after which they are created,—this truth is not affected by the variations of created intelligences. It is antecedent to them, and remains immutable, as the effect of an increate Mind. If therefore the reality of things produces no conformity in the human intellect, or not that conformity which the matter requires, instead of there being truth in man, there is falsehood, ignorance, error. The human mind cannot dispose of truth; it is on the contrary subjected to the imposition of truth from without. Whereas then with Protagoras every conception was true, with St. Thomas many are false from the absence of application of the external measure; and those which are true, are only so far true as they have submitted to the adequate influence of that outer rule.

We have seen above that not only the first principles of speculative reason, but also those of practical reason, are images or reflections from the divine truth, and not the eternal reasons themselves. ‘Quædam sunt vera in quibus omnes homines concordant, sicut sunt prima principia intellectûs tam *speculativi* quam *practici*, secundum quod universaliter in mentibus hominum divinæ veritatis quasi imago resultat.’¹ We thence gather the difference that exists between the Lex æterna, and the Lex

¹ Contra Gent. iii. 47.

naturalis. All practical reason tends to good, as speculative reason tends to truth; and as both good and truth are properties of entity, they both have a different nature in God from what they have in creatures. The *lex æterna*, which is a regulation proceeding from the goodness of God, must have accordingly a different essence from the *lex naturalis*, which is the human rule for the attainment of good. It is true that both are concerned with the good of finite beings; but as we have seen in the case of increate verity, that it is not the object alone which gives it its eternal and infinite character, but the mode and subject in which it is conceived, so also in the case of good, which is itself a result of truth, not merely the effect in creatures characterises the nature of the good, but the Being from whom it emanates and the divine idea in which it is proposed, to which we must add the divine glory to which it ultimately must tend. Now Billuart justly observes that the *lex naturalis* in man is the participation of the light of the eternal law. ‘*Legem naturalem,*’ he says, ‘*nihil aliud esse quam lumen naturale ut impressum et participatum a Ratione seu Lege Æternâ.*’ Man being differently constituted from the irrational creature in that he can dispose of his own actions, is not only governed by an extrinsic law, the divine law which keeps everything within certain bounds of order, but he is left to be a law to himself. And as law is a reason and rule of things,

it is necessary that the principles of that rule should be impressed upon his practical reason. Accordingly God has imparted to him not only the principles of speculative judgment, but those of practical reason, and both these are reflections and images of the divine reason within his soul. But according to the doctrine we have expounded and from which there can be no departure in regard to the practical reason of man, these principles of natural law are not those of the eternal law *secundum eandem rationem speciei seu generis*; they are indeed similitudes and analogies of them, tending to the same effect and order as the increate law, but proceeding from a finite comprehension and through a finite measure. This statement will be clearer, when we have obviated an objection which might be brought from the words of St. Thomas himself. In the Prima Secundæ of his Summa, Qu. 61, Art. 2, in answer to the difficulty, that if man is sufficiently governed by the *lex æterna* there is no need of the *lex naturalis*; he says that the objection would hold good ‘*si lex naturalis esset aliquid diversum a lege æternâ.*’ By saying that there is no *diversity* between the two laws, it might at first sight be thought that he confounds the two, making them one under different names. Billuart in a similar connection says that the natural is something ‘*non omnino diversum;*’ and this affix gives the clue to the sense of St. Thomas, as indeed the words which he immediately preposes and subjoins

also give. *Diversum* does not mean numerically, specifically, or generically different *ratione entis et essentiae*; but means *of opposite tendency and influence*. The natural law does not inculcate anything different from the eternal law, on the contrary it conspires with it and is one with it in its dictate. And it is believed that diversity in the schools has rather the sense of foreign and contrary direction than that of distinction whether in number, species, or genus. It is more like *ἕτερον* than *ἄλλο*. Hence Capponi in the notes on the text in question observes: ‘Lex enim naturalis non est quid diversum a lege æternâ, sed quid ei *subordinatum*, utpote *quædam participatio ejus*.’ Keeping then in mind what has been before explained of the sense in which St. Thomas uses participation when comparing the qualities of creatures with the attributes of God, we see that here also it is an unity of analogy and direction which he speaks of between the natural and the eternal law. He completes indeed the phrase adduced as an objection, by immediately adding: ‘non autem est nisi participatio ejus.’ He had just before observed in treating of the same subject, that all things rational and irrational participate in some measure in the eternal law, and points out the manner. ‘Omnia participant aliquantulum legem æternam, inquantum scilicet *ex impressione ejus* habent inclinationes in proprios actus et fines.’ He then proceeds to show that in rational creatures there is a participation of a special

character, inasmuch as they are a law to themselves. ‘Inter cætera autem rationalis creatura excellentiori modo divinæ providentiæ subjacet, inquantum ipsa fit providentiæ particeps, sibi ipsi et aliis providens. Unde et in ipsa *participatur ratio æterna*, per quam habet naturalem inclinationem ad debitum actum et finem: et talis participatio legis æternæ in rationali creaturâ lex naturalis dicitur. Unde . . . (Psalmista) dicit “Signatum est super nos lumen vultûs tui, Domine,” *quasi lumen rationis naturalis*, quo discernimus quid sit bonum, et quid malum, quod pertinet ad legem naturalem, *nihil aliud sit quam impressio divini luminis in nobis*. Unde patet quod lex naturalis nihil aliud est quam *participatio legis æternæ in rationali creaturâ*.’ Here then we meet again with precisely the same doctrine as that exhibited in the first part with regard to speculative reason; and which inculcates not identity with the eternal reason of God, but a participation by likeness and analogy. The same expressions are repeated. It is an impression, a sigillation, and consequently an effect. But lest there be any shadow of hesitation on this point, the reader is directed to another passage of the same portion of the Summa, in which all possible equivocation seems to be withdrawn. ‘Respondeo dicendum,¹ quod dupliciter aliquid cognosci potest. Uno modo in seipso, alio modo *in suo*.

¹ I. II. xciii. 2. The same forms of reasoning are here reproduced, but applied to law.

effectu, in quo aliqua similitudo ejus invenitur, sicut aliquis non videns solem in sua substantia cognoscit ipsam in sua irradiatione. Sic igitur dicendum est, quod legem æternam nullus potest cognoscere secundum quod in seipsâ est, nisi solus Deus et beati qui Deum per essentiam vident; sed omnis creatura rationalis ipsam cognoscit secundum aliquam ejus irradiationem, vel majorem vel minorem. Omnis enim cognitio veritatis est quædam irradiatio et participatio legis æternæ. . . . Ad primum ergo dicendum, quod ea quæ sunt Dei, in seipsis cognosci a nobis non possunt, sed tamen in effectibus suis nobis manifestantur, secundum illud Rom. 1: "Invisibilia Dei per ea quæ facta sunt, intellecta conspiciuntur." This last passage is so conclusive that nothing more is now required to show that we do not contemplate directly and intuitively the eternal law of God, but gather it from its effects and through the derived light of our reason. Thus is verified the mystic sense of the words of the Psalmist as proposed by St. Augustine and St. Thomas: 'Diminutæ sunt veritates a filiis hominum;' since the object which we consider is an effect, not an attribute of God, and the subject is an effect not an univocal participation of a divine light. The object gives us the image of the divine plan, the subjective light is a created likeness of the Divine Intellect. And consequently neither the speculative nor the practical reasons of the Divine Mind are seen by us directly and intuitively, but all are seen

mediately, and in a glass, darkly. What was said then of his Essence applies in the same manner to his attributes, and his ideas.

But we are interested to know not only what is the conclusion of sound philosophy, but to understand as far as possible the manner in which it is verified in nature. If we see only mediately the reasons of things as they are in the divine wisdom, how is this process of the human mind conducted? How do we discover truth, if it is not infused? What is there in the world out of us and in our own understanding that can lead us to verities so elevated as those which the human soul attains to? We must revert then to some first principles, which were recorded by the author of this essay, in another essay on the 'Origin of Knowledge' published about eleven years since, before any sound or recognised reaction had set in, at least in this country, against Ontologism and Idealism, but which did not meet with much notice or consideration at the time.¹

It is the Peripatetic doctrine, and no doubt the true one, that the soul in the beginning is devoid of all ideas and knowledge; that it is a *tabula rasa* in which, as Aristotle says, nothing is written, though possessed of faculties for acquiring truth; and consequently that it is in a potential state

¹ It appears however that the illustrious Kleutgen began to write in 1850. See Beilagen, 1868, second pamphlet, p. 13. The *Civiltà Cattolica* had also advocated similar views.

with regard to all ideas, thoughts, conceptions, principles whatsoever. We are speaking of that beginning of a physical succession, according to which the cause precedes the effect; for it is impossible to say what succession of time there is between the first introduction of the soul into the body and its first thoughts. As however the three faculties of the soul, the vegetative, the sensitive and the intellectual all belong to one substance, and the higher presupposes the lower upon which it is founded, the first operation of the animating principle will be the vegetative, which being devoid of all knowledge, gives to the soul a primary action without any ideas. The next operation is that of sense, which conveys, it is true, information, but of a concrete corporeal nature.¹ Lastly, the intellectual knowledge is obtained in consequence of the sensitive. Thus two successive actions take place before the intelligible ideas are produced. This consideration is not affected by the question whether there are three successive souls or forms in the formation of man. For though the doctrine of St. Thomas appears to be the right one, and has been implicitly followed by the Church in her prescriptions for baptism, namely that the rational soul is only infused after the lapse of many days from conception, when the body is sufficiently

¹ Ἐχει δύναμιν σύμφυτον κριτικὴν ἣν καλοῦσιν αἰσθησιν.
 Analog. Post. ii. 19 ap. Trend. De An. p. 170.

organised, and consequently that there are other animating principles, first a vegetative, afterwards a sensitive, previously present to prepare the development of the body for the introduction of a spiritual principle; yet it is, not this view alone, but the subordination of the faculties of one soul, which according to the scholastic teaching obliges us to place the two operations of the vegetative and sensitive life before the intellectual. Accordingly it is altogether contrary to that philosophy to suppose the soul introduced in the act of thinking, or with actual ideas, or even latent ideas and intellectual activities, such as Hamilton tries to insinuate. Still less is the essence of the soul actual thought, or thought at all, if thought can be distinguished from act, according to the theory attributed to Descartes and his followers. The soul is a spiritual substance which has power to think, and thinks through the medium of faculties which are the accidents of its substance. ‘In aliis intelligentiis intelligere ipsum non est subsistens, sed *actus subsistentis*.’¹ Before then that the soul actually thinks, it is said to be *in potentia* with regard to the act; which is a distinction drawn from Aristotle, and particularly from his treatise on the soul, where he teaches that the intellect is in a state of δύναμις, before it proceeds to that of ἐνέργεια or ἐντελέχεια. Leibnitz himself, though appealed to by the advocates of

¹ Contra Gent. i. 102.

innate ideas, yet was too learned and penetrating not to perceive the weak side of them. In a passage quoted by Hamilton¹ from his *Nouveaux Essais* he observes: 'It is thus that ideas and truths are innate in us, like our inclinations, dispositions, natural habitudes or *virtualities*, not as *actions*, although these virtualities be always accompanied by some corresponding actions frequently, however, unperceived.' Leibnitz does not say whether the actions are simultaneous or consecutive; for if consecutive, there is the order of cause and effect which we demand. We have no wish to dispute the existence of a natural inclination or habit; for every power or faculty has its predisposition to act. But we must be careful not to confound such preparatory disposition and habit, with that habitual knowledge which remains after actual thought; for we do not lose our knowledge, when we cease to exercise our minds upon it, but as Aristotle says, it remains in a sort of dormant state, yet ready to be elicited and reproduced. But the habit or disposition to use our faculties which nature gives is purely an inclination to facilitate the operation, and not the result, of any action or pre-existence. Aristotle and St. Thomas are free from such equivocations. The former says:²—*Δυνάμει πᾶς ἐστὶ τὰ νοητὰ ὁ νοῦς, ἀλλ' ἐντε-
λεχεία οὐδέν, πρὶν ἂν νοῇ· δεῖ δ' οὕτως, ὥσπερ ἐν γραμ-*

¹ Vol. ii. p. 357.² De Anim. iii. 4.

ματεῖω ὃ μὴδὲν ὑπάρχει ἐντελεχεία γεγραμμένον· ὅπερ συμβαίνει ἐπὶ τοῦ νοῦ. How the intellect is not only *in potentia*, but is even the intelligible things themselves *in potentia*, will be afterwards shown. St. Thomas observes to the same effect: 'Intellectus autem humanus, qui est infimus in ordine intellectuum, et maxime remotus a perfectione divini intellectûs, est in potentia respectu intelligibilium; et in principio est sicut tabula rasa, in qua nihil est scriptum.'¹ And Cajetan in his comment upon the article from which this passage is taken, coincides with these Masters.²

Our next step is to establish the nature of our first acquisition of knowledge. All human knowledge begins by the senses. This assertion is continually repeated by St. Thomas. To take one passage almost at random, we have the following words in his Treatise contra Gentes:³—'Quod quidem nobis circa Deum non accidit; nam ad substantiam ipsius capiendam intellectus humanus non potest naturali virtute pertingere, *quum intellectûs nostri, secundum modum præsentis vitæ, cognitio a sensu incipiat*; et ideo ea quæ in sensu non cadunt, non possunt humano intellectu capi, nisi quatenus ex sensibus eorum cognitio colligitur.' Hence there is a sensitive knowledge, and there is an intellectual knowledge. And the sensitive is the first obtained.

¹ Sum. I. lxxix. 2.

² 'Il maestro di color che sanno,' said of Aristotle by Dante.

³ i. 3.

‘Est ergo dicendum, quod cognitio singularium est prior quoad nos quam cognitio universalium, sicut cognitio sensitiva quam cognitio intellectiva.’¹ When then Leibnitz admits the dictum, ‘nihil est in intellectu quin prius fuerit in sensu,’ but makes an exception for the intellect itself, he seeks by an ingenious equivocation to escape from the authority of the schools. His words are thus quoted by Hamilton from an epistle to Bierling in 1710: ‘Our mind is innate to itself . . . it is true, indeed, that there is nothing in the intellect which was not previously in the sense . . . *except the intellect itself.*’² Certainly St. Thomas is far from making such an exception. For he says: ‘Intellectus humanus . . . ex seipso habet virtutem *ut intelligat, non autem ut intelligatur*, nisi secundum id quod fit actu . . . Quia con-naturale est intellectui nostro secundum statum præsentis vitæ quod ad materialia et sensibilia respiciat, consequens est ut sic *seipsum intelligat intellectus noster secundum quod fit actu per species a sensibilibus abstractas* per lumen intellectus agentis, quod est actus ipsorum intelligibilium, et eis mediantibus intelligit intellectus possibilis. *Non ergo per essentiam suam sed per actum suum se cognoscit intellectus noster.*’ From the fact of the *physical* presence of the intellect to its own operations it cannot be inferred that it is *logically* present to itself. We have already remarked that

¹ Sum. I. lxxxv. 3.² Ham. Metaph. ii. 354.

though God is intimately present to all our intellectual apprehensions, yet He is not present according to knowledge, or, as it is called, logically. There is a similar play of words in the passage from Pacius given by Hamilton.¹ He says: '*Cognitio omnis a sensibus exordium, a mente originem primam habet.*' If Pacius means thereby that the senses are mere occasions, and not also sources of our knowledge, he departs from the ancient teaching. If he means that there are intellectual powers ready to receive information from the senses, and to give it an intellectual form, this would correspond with the scholastic teaching, but hardly justify the word origin. Hamilton understands Pacius in the former sense, and adds of his own that, 'the primitive cognitions seem to leap ready armed from the womb of reason, like Pallas from the head of Jupiter,' wherein it is difficult to understand mere virtualities with Leibnitz, and not actions.

From a quotation made a little above it will be seen that sensitive knowledge is concerned with singulars, intellectual with universals. The sense apprehends things as concrete and individual, and not as abstractions or generalities. '*Cum et apprehensio sensûs non sit nisi particularis.*'² It perceives *the* thing, not *a* thing, which shows the meaning of the expression *hæcceitas*, often found in old writers. It is true that it first perceives things

¹ p. 351.

² Contra Gent. i. 44.

confusedly and in a compound manner, yet whatever it does perceive is concrete, defined by time and place. The community or generality which falls under its apprehension is physical, not logical; and therefore it is true that physical *wholes* or integrities strike it before details and parts. But these are not logical universals, but singulars. Hamilton seems to have mistaken the language of Aristotle at the beginning of his *Physics*, when he speaks of proceeding from generals to particulars. *Διὸ ἐκ τῶν καθόλου ἐπὶ τὰ καθ' ἕκαστα δεῖ προίεναι.* These *καθόλου* are sensible wholes, as he immediately goes on to say: *τὸ γὰρ ὅλον κατὰ τὴν αἰσθησιν γνωριμώτερον.* The *καθ' ἕκαστα* on the other hand are the elements and physical components; he had just before said, *ὕστερον δὲ ἐκ τούτων γίνεται γνώριμα τὰ στοιχεῖα, καὶ αἱ ἀρχαί, διαιροῦσι ταῦτα.* The *ὅλα* again he had already observed are the *συγκεχυμένα*, the confused or compound. These expressions are here taken in a physical, not abstract or logical, sense. For when viewing them in a logical aspect, as in his *Analyt. Post. i. 2*,¹ he uses the opposite language: *λέγω δὲ πρὸς ἡμᾶς μὲν πρότερα καὶ γνωριμώτερα τὰ ἐγγύτερον τῆς αἰσθήσεως, ἀπλῶς δὲ πρότερα καὶ γνωριμώτερα* (that is to nature, or per se) *τὰ πορρώτερον· ἔστι δὲ πορρωτάτω μὲν τὰ καθόλου μάλιστα, ἐγγυτάτω δὲ τὰ καθ' ἕκαστα.* Hamilton himself has often drawn attention to this distinction of *wholes*. Indeed his famous

¹ See Trendlenburg, *Element. Log.* p. 5 and notes.

theory of comprehensive and extensive reasoning is based upon this difference.¹ In opposition to the materialism of the senses, the intellect first apprehends universals, by abstracting from the information of the senses that which is general and common to all things of the same species, thus shewing its likeness to the mind of God in seeing things according to their widest and deepest principles, and yet remaining within the limits of a finite apprehension. Hence we may observe, how the operations of these two faculties of sense and intellect reveal the compound nature of man, the corporeal and spiritual united; and verify the saying so often repeated by St. Thomas, that the soul of man is on the confines or horizon of the two worlds of matter and spirit.

But we must now advert to an incidental question, without the solution of which it would be impossible to understand the action of any of our cognitive faculties. How is knowledge acquired, apart from the faculties or instruments; what is the relation of the thing known and the subject knowing? Natural knowledge, we have seen, is not innate, nor is it infused. Is it then sought out of ourselves? It is a popular idea that it is, grounded on the fact that we must exert ourselves to find the truth, and even change place to attain it. Yet at the bottom it is not so. Not only is the Platonic notion false that the mind is from the

¹ See *Metaph.* vol. ii. p. 340.

first in possession of latent, dormant, choked truths; but it is not true either, that there is an egress of the mind into the outer world to take possession of knowledge and truth. The soul of man is rather conquered by the communication of things from without. To a certain point it is conquered whether it will or not. For all its knowledge takes its source from the receptive state in which it lies open to the accession of truth. This is called the passivity of the soul in its acquisition of knowledge, a passivity conjoined to an immanent activity, and which has not the condition of docibility, unless the mind energises at the same time.¹ Its conquests accordingly are influences from without, presents made to it by the Great Mover of all creatures, which it is indeed able to improve and to compare and connect, but which it is not able to originate. For all the materials of our knowledge we are like children before the nursing hand of Nature. ‘*Scientia intellectûs humani a rebus quodammodo causatur, unde provenit quod scibilia sunt mensura scientiæ humanæ.*’² Not the most worthy is the cause and the measure;

¹ The union of the active with the passive power is distinctly enforced by Aristotle in 3 De Anim. ch. v. : ἔστιν ὁ μὲν τοιοῦτος νοῦς τῷ πάντα γίνεσθαι—this is the passive or possible intellect ; ὁ δὲ τῷ πάντα ποιεῖν ὡς ἕξις τις, οἷον τὸ φῶς—here is the active power, intellectus agens, compared to a light within us; and the active, he says, is the more noble: αἰεὶ γὰρ τιμώτερον τὸ ποιοῦν τοῦ πάσχοντος.

² Contra Gent. i. 61, 62, 65, 67.

for then such would be the human mind; but the least worthy, the things of Nature. Yet if we look deeper, it is the action of the First Agent, which is the fundamental cause, and of which Nature is the instrument. We here see the great distinction between the intellect of God and that of man, noticed by St. Thomas. The first is the measure of all things, and, by knowing them, gives them their existence. ‘Intellectus Divinus per suam scientiam est causa rerum.’¹ On the contrary, things without are the measure and cause of our knowledge; they enter into us, they take possession of us, they modify our soul; in a word, they inform it, that is, they give it a new form, a new being. But what is this new form and being? Not substantial, as it is evident. Accidental therefore; so that the soul becomes modified or coloured by the species of things received from without. ‘Species intelligibilis in intellectu præter essentiam ejus existens, *esse accidentale* habet, ratione cujus scientia nostra inter accidentia computatur.’² But again, what are the species? for it is necessary at the present day to answer such questions. The species are representations or similitudes of external objects, through which we acquire the knowledge of the objects themselves. They are not, as Hamilton misrepresents the Scholastic view, and according to a general misapprehension of writers during the last century or more, the

¹ Ibid. 61.

² Contra Gent. i. 46.

objects of contemplation themselves in their primary and direct use, but are the means whereby we perceive the objects. They are called the medium *quo*, not the medium *quod*. The schoolmen hold therefore with Reid, that we perceive the objects themselves, and yet hold also that we perceive them by means of a representation. 'Species intellecta *secundario* est id quod intelligitur; sed id quod intelligitur *primo* est *res* cujus species intelligibilis est similitudo.'¹ The mistake of many has perhaps arisen from the supposition that the similitude or representation were something separate from the soul or intellect; whereas it is the faculty of the soul itself modified by the image. To know is to receive an impression on the soul from the object. It is not to receive the similitude, and then to contemplate it, but to have the object itself in the mind *in esse cognoscibili*. For it is not an adequate account of the Scholastic theory to say that the representation is like a glass through which we view the object, while it escapes observation itself at first from its transparency; for this would give no reason of the similitude of the representation. But the Peripatetic principle supposes that the object itself enters into the soul in its ideal or intelligible or sensible state. Democritus seems to have conceived that objects entered into the receptacles of human perception in a physical material manner, by real emanations or effluvia from the bodies themselves. But this is

¹ Sum. I. lxxxv. 2.

absurd. The introduction therefore must be of a spiritual or immaterial nature, that is, by means of the image or representation which invests the faculty itself, and makes it to know. And thus they say that every thing has two states of being, the natural and the intelligible, or more properly cognoscible, since the sense perceives as well as the intellect; and that the object communicates itself to rational and sentient beings in the latter form; so that it is in the soul, and the soul is, in a way, it. This is the meaning of the words of Aristotle: *δυνάμει πῶς ἐστὶ τὰ νοητὰ ὁ νοῦς, ἀλλ' ἐντελεχείᾳ οὐδὲν πρὶν αὖ νοῆν*. When then the *νοῦς* does actually perceive, it becomes as it were the *νοητὰ* actually. Still more articulately he says in the 3rd Book de Anim. and 8th chapter, *εἰπωμεν πάλιν ὅτι ἡ ψυχὴ τὰ ὄντα πῶς ἐστὶ πάντα . . . ἔστι δ' ἡ ἐπιστήμη μὲν τὰ ἐπιστητά, ἡ δ' αἴσθησις τὰ αἰσθητά*. But why does he say *πῶς*, in a manner? Because the faculty of knowledge does not become the object in its physical state, but according to its ideal or intelligible form: *οὐ γὰρ ὁ λίθος ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ, ἀλλὰ τὸ εἶδος*. The intellect thus retaining of course its substantial individuality, and not being confused in the world, acquires nevertheless an accidental and adventitious existence by communication with all things out of itself. Whereas originally it was a *tabula rasa*, it becomes by degrees a *painted* surface, as Cajetan says; it receives its new form, and becomes informed, and advances continually in a

more perfect adequation or conformity with the things of the world, in which consists its truth.¹

It is now asked, whether from this account of the acquisition of knowledge, which regards primarily the objects of the material world, we are to make any exception for the consideration of immaterial objects and truths, and the first principles of reasoning. The answer is definite, that no exception is admissible. According to St. Thomas immaterial things are only known by material and sensible things. By this assertion it is not meant that the sensible representation of things is all the information that the human soul can acquire of immaterial things; but that it is the foundation and the source of our conceptions of things immaterial. The intellect derives its materials from the senses, but it contributes its own light, the $\phi\omega\varsigma$ of the *intellectus agens*, and its own operations, and in this manner transforms them into immaterial and intelligible species, which are received into the *intellectus possibilis*. The sensible species therefore, which are called by St. Thomas after Aristotle *phantasmata*, are the origin of intellectual species, but not the forms of them; they are the $\epsilon\iota\delta\eta$ as it were of the $\epsilon\iota\delta\eta$, the forms of one faculty of knowledge, leading the way to those of the higher; yet both represent the same external object, but as it were through two media of vision in subordination. There is no need to deny what Aristotle

¹ See also Fonseca, Metaph. lib. iv. ch. ii. qu. vi. § 8, p. 799.

says, that a phantasm always accompanies our intellectual apprehensions, and that we always seek to view everything in a sensible image. Nevertheless this image must not be mistaken for the intelligible idea itself. The intellect abstracts from the sensible phantasm by means of that native active power which is called *intellectus agens*, all that is of universal, indeterminate nature, and it is thus able to contemplate even corporeal things in a spiritual manner, divested of the circumstances of time and place; and also to mount to the consideration of beings purely immaterial, its own soul, angelic substances, transcendental verities, God. It is important to establish the fact, that all our knowledge concerning these high truths, is also due to the impression of the external world upon our senses in the first place. Let us then support this fundamental principle with the authority of St. Thomas. ‘Etsi Deus,’ he says, ‘sensibilia omnia et sensum excedat, ejus tamen effectus, ex quibus demonstratio sumitur ad probandum Deum esse, sensibiles sunt; et sic *nostræ cognitionis origo in sensu est, etiam de his quæ sensum excedunt.*’¹ Here we see that St. Thomas applies the term *origo* to the senses, and does not, as Pacius would suggest, prefer *exordium*, though both terms with the former would signify the same thing. Another passage of St. Thomas, which has already been quoted in another connection, deserves to be

¹ Contra Gent. i. 12.

reproduced in this place. ‘*Dicendum quod incorporea, quorum non sunt phantasmata, cognoscuntur a nobis per comparisonem ad corpora sensibilia quorum sunt phantasmata Alias etiam incorporeas substantias in statu præsentis vitæ cognoscere non possumus, nisi per remotionem vel comparisonem ad corporalia, et ideo cum de hujusmodi aliquid intelligimus necesse habemus converti ad phantasmata corporum, licet ipsorum non sint phantasmata.*’¹ Elsewhere he thus speaks of the human soul: ‘*Non habet naturaliter sibi inditam notitiam veritatis, sicut angeli, sed oportet quod eam colligat ex rebus divisibilibus per viam sensûs.*’² But let us descend into details, to obtain as precise an understanding as the difficulty of the subject will admit.

The first object which the intellect apprehends is *ens*. ‘*Illud quod primo cadit in apprehensione est ens, cujus intellectus includitur in omnibus.*’³ This object is indeed supremely abstract and general. And yet the idea of it is obtained in consequence of an impression which has preceded it in the senses, and has already produced the sensation of a concrete thing. ‘*Est autem alius intellectus (that is, different from the angelic), scilicet humanus, qui nec est suum intelligere (that is, whose essence is not thought, as the Cartesians have pretended), nec sui intelligere est objectum primum ejus essentia* (in opposition to Hamilton, who makes the Ego to be the first consideration of the soul), sed

¹ Summ. I. lxxxiv. 7. ² Sum. I. lxxvi. 5. ³ Sum. I. II. xiv. 2.

aliquid extrinsecum, *scilicet natura materialis rei.*¹ The intellect takes then its first idea from a material thing, something outside of itself. But it is to be observed that while the sense receives the knowledge of the individual, material thing, the intellect on the contrary receives its first idea of the *nature* of the material thing, that is of something universal and abstract. And as there are many universals in one thing, it is enquired which universal first represents to the intellect the material nature. It is that of *ens*, as St. Thomas goes on to say: ‘Objectum intellectûs est commune quoddam, scilicet *ens* et verum, sub quo comprehenditur etiam ipse actus intelligendi; unde intellectus potest suum actum cognoscere, sed non primo, quia nec primum objectum intellectûs nostri secundum præsentem statum est *quodlibet ens* et verum; *sed ens et verum consideratum in rebus materialibus, ex quibus in cognitionem omnium aliorum devenit.*’ Here then St. Thomas declares that the knowledge of *all things else* proceeds from that of material things, a truth equally affirmed when he says that the first object of the intellect is not *quodlibet ens*, but *ens in materialibus consideratum*. He also points out that in subordination to this first apprehension of the intellect other abstractions are presently conceived, such as those of unity, potency, act.²

Let us now proceed to the special case of first

¹ Sum. I. lxxxvii. 3.

² Sum. I. lxxxv. 1.

principles. The basis of all knowledge being established, as we have seen, upon simple ideas or apprehensions of the most general objects, such as entity, unity, verity, identity, difference, potentiality, actuality, and the like, it will readily be apprehended that first principles which are not simple apprehensions, *but judgments*, are acts of the understanding secondary to the information of the primary objects just mentioned. And if the primary objects of the intellect, and the first of all *ens*, depend upon a previous sensitive perception, and originate therein, much more must any truth which involves a compound action, such as that of a judgment in principles, be due ulteriorly to the senses. It is true that we assume that all judgments are subsequent to simple apprehension. For though Hamilton and other modern writers would reverse the whole received order, or at least confuse it, this is not the place to discuss a point so universally settled in the schools. ‘Intellectus noster *apprehendendo incompleta*, nondum pertingit ad ultimam sui perfectionem, quia adhuc est *in potentia respectu compositionis et divisionis*.’¹ All judgments concern composition and division, which are the two forms of comparison. Hamilton himself speaks of ‘comparison or judgment,’ as the same, and says that ‘a comparison, a judgment, involves the supposition of two relative terms.’² If principles

¹ Contra Gent. i. 59.

² Metaph. vol. ii. lect. xxxv. p. 291. See also lect. xxxiv. and xxxvii.

then are judgments, they must be subsequent to the first of all apprehensions, that of *ens*. And if *ens* itself is not known but by abstraction from material things, and is not an innate idea, much less can principles, though first principles, be primary or innate cognitions. St. Thomas¹ says: ‘Sicut enim a veritate Intellectûs Divini effluunt in intellectum angelicum *species rerum innatæ*, secundum quas omnia cognoscit; a veritate Intellectûs Divini *exemplariter* procedit in intellectum nostrum *veritas primorum principiorum*, secundum quam de omnibus judicamus; et quia per eam judicare non possumus nisi secundum quod est *similitudo primæ veritatis*, ideo secundum primam veritatem de omnibus dicimur judicare.’ It will be observed how St. Thomas carries his consistency of principle to all the applications of his doctrine. Here first principles are said to flow *exemplariter*, not identically, and to be a *similitude* of the First Truth.

But to go even closer into the matter, what is the first of all principles? St. Thomas and with him the School in general say that it is the principle of contradiction. ‘*Primum principium* indemonstrabile est quod *non est simul affirmare et negare*, quod *fundatur* supra rationem entis et non entis, et *super hoc principio omnia alia fundantur*.’² The principle of contradiction is not the first idea obtained, for we have seen that *ens*

¹ De Veritate qu. I. art. iv. ad v.

² I. II. xciv. 2.

and *non ens* precede it; and here it is said that it is founded upon them. But it is the first law which emerges from the consideration of two opposites. These must first be apprehended, before any judgment can be formed. It is true that the knowledge of the terms does not of itself alone convey the truth of the principle; there must exist in the mind a light by which it can sever incompatible things. But this is merely a virtual power ready to be applied to the influence of things. It is indeed the way to know and to judge; for such operations cannot be contained in merely corporeal subjects and acts; they are the proper energies of a spiritual being. But as apprehension does not precede the influence of the external object, neither does judgment; for the more perfect presupposes the imperfect. If the knowledge of *ens* and *non ens* is obtained only through the senses, though acquired in a higher sphere, *a fortiori* must the first judgment, and the first principle be founded radically upon the senses, and not be innate. The intellectual power is innate indeed, but it is a power in the native situation of created power, formed to act, but not by its essence in act. That this train of reasoning is according to St. Thomas, is shown moreover by his own explicit statements. To show that principles *per se nota*, are not to be understood of judgments already formed in the mind on its creation, and introduction into the body, but presuppose the acquisition of the simple ideas which

constitute the terms of the propositions, he speaks as follows. ‘*Illa enim per se nota dicuntur, quæ statim, notis terminis, cognoscuntur; sicut cognito quid est totum, et quid est pars, statim cognoscitur quod omne totum est majus sua parte.*’¹ This principle then, certainly among the primary, that the whole is greater than its part, is not known as a proposition latent in the mind from any actuality present or past, but requires to be formed that the terms whole and part shall first have been learnt and compared. If there are some who have been perplexed by the continual recurrence in the Aristotelic and Scholastic philosophy of the expression *principia per se nota*, as if there were in it a mixture of sensism and idealism, Epicureism and Platonism, let them be persuaded that these and similar forms of language and doctrine imply no syncretism and confusion of opposite extremes, but that true *via media*, which as we see in the Ethics is another extreme of its own, avoiding the errors of the other two, not by blending them, but by starting upwards to the acme of truth, distant alike from both divergences at the foot. These principia are said to be *per se nota*, because though they pre-require the knowledge of the terms which enter into them, yet the light of reason is able to show at once the mutual conformity or incompatibility of such terms, according as the proposition is affir-

¹ Contra Gentes, i. 10. See also Summa I. xvii. 3 ad 2.

mative or negative. Let St. Thomas¹ be heard again. ‘*Omne totum sua parte majus esse per se notum est simpliciter, ei autem qui rationem totius mente non conciperet, oporteret esse ignotum; et sic fit ut ad ea quæ sunt notissima rerum, noster intellectus se habeat, ut oculus noctuæ ad solem, ut secundo Metaph. Text. 1. dicitur.*’² But still more explicit than the preceding statements is that which he says in the *Prima Secundæ*.³ ‘*Intellectus principiorum dicitur esse habitus naturalis; ex ipsâ enim naturâ animæ intellectualis convenit homini quod statim cognito quid est totum, et quid est pars, cognoscat quod omne totum est majus suâ parte; et sic simile in cæteris. Sed quid sit totum et quid sit pars, cognoscere non potest nisi per species intelligibiles a phantasmatibus acceptis. Et propter hoc Philosophus in fine Posteriorum [text. ult. circ. med.] ostendit quod cognitio principiorum provenit nobis ex sensu.*’ These last words then are our thesis in *ipsissimis verbis*. The knowledge of principles proceeds to us from the sense. First then we find it laid down that the first principles, though known by themselves, yet presuppose the knowledge of the things which are represented in the subject and predicate of the comparison, which constitutes the principle; secondly,

¹ Contra Gent. i. 11.

² The passage of Aristotle’s *Metaph.* was given at the beginning of this essay.

³ Qu. li. art 1.

that the prior knowledge of these things or terms can only be obtained in intelligible species drawn from the phantasms of sense; and thirdly, that the doctrine of Aristotle, that even the knowledge of principles proceeds from the sense, is correct.

With the light of the preceding explanations a true view will be obtained of that habit of the soul which Aristotle calls *νοῦς*.¹ He introduces his chapter on *νοῦς* in the sixth book of the Ethics, in which he treats of the intellectual powers, by saying that a faculty or habit is required for the apprehension of universals and necessary truths, and he ends it by saying, *λείπεται νοῦν εἶναι τῶν ἀρχῶν*. This faculty of apprehending first principles is applicable both to the speculative and practical, as he observes in the ninth chapter. But we must not pervert his meaning into the opinion that *νοῦς* is a *locus principiorum*, as Hamilton says,² in the sense of being a receptacle of innate truths; but must understand thereby a power of the soul to see immediately the relations of certain ideas received already into the mind by abstraction. It is indeed a natural light, one derived from God himself, nay formed after the likeness of God. But still it awaits the species offered to it through the medium of sense, before it can apply itself, and locate actual

¹ The Conimbric. Logica points out that *νοῦς* is a habit rather than a distinct faculty, which word we here use in a wide sense. Vide pars 2, p. 295. De Præcog. qu. 1, art. 4.

² See lect. xxxviii. vol. ii. Metaph.

judgments and principles in the understanding. It is more properly then a *locus principiorum* when these have been once gained and are retained; or it is such potentially, as fitted to receive and locate them. But in its native import νοῦς relates rather to ἐπὶ ὁλήψις, the apprehension or intuition of the connection of certain simple ideas, that is, of principles; for so Aristotle describes it in *Metaph.* xii. 7: ὁ νοῦς . . νοητὸς . . γίγνεται θιγγάνων καὶ νοῶν, the first of which expressions precisely signifies to touch, to take hold of, as our word apprehension.¹ It seems to be an impression that the schoolmen reject all intuition. But this is certainly not the case. The intuition of God directly they do refuse to the present condition of man. But this is not the only intuition. There is an intuition of simple ideas, there is the intuition of the connection of ideas in an affirmation, there is the intuition of the bond of two propositions called the consequence, which establishes the consequent or conclusion. We have seen that Durandus even calls the perception of the senses an intuition. The word perhaps is not so frequently used as that of visio or evidentia. But the import is the same of immediate cognition. Liberatore uses the term freely as applied to the first acts of the mind. But Idealists and Ontologists have done their best to produce a distaste for the word. However, the intuition of first principles whether speculative or practical is the noblest power

¹ Conf. Trendlenburg *De Anima*, p. 174–75, and *Elementa*, p. 114.

of man, a power altogether removed from the irrational creatures, which, as Aristotle says, have no apprehension of universals, but only imagination and memory of individual things.¹ Of this faculty St. Thomas says that by it there is '*principiorum naturaliter notorum cognitio nobis divinitus . . . indita.*'² And in it is the most perfect representation of the Divine Mind in whose likeness it is created; since the Intellection of God is only intuitive, and that by one act from all eternity. They therefore among men have the higher gift, who have the greater grasp of principles, and who penetrate most deeply into the fundamental principles. This apprehension is more proper to men than to women, for the reason that men are placed to govern and to form plans and make discoveries, and God apportions the means to the office. To a certain degree a powerful hold of principles interferes with the discursive acts of reasoning. And it is not uncommon to find a firm appreciation of certain principles, which are commonly the conclusions of reasoning, without the power to collect the arguments which establish them. This is the reason why Aristotle says we must respect even the guesses of the wise.³

If then the human mind possesses a light derived by created effects from the divine light, and capacities of judging and reasoning impressed with the

¹ Ethics vii. 3, p. 274, ed. Brew.

² Contra Gent. i. 7.

³ Ethics, vi. 9.

similitude of the Divine Intellect, it is not to be wondered that divine truths are communicated to our understandings, though in a diminished form, and through the power of abstraction, by the world which is framed in accordance with them, and naturally declares the glory of its Maker. Nor is it inconsistent with his Providence that he should make all his creatures to become the vehicles of his wise decrees and laws; and thus cause them to speak a language to rational beings even though material and corporeal themselves.

We have only to add to these considerations that though truth in the human mind has not the perfections of truth which it has in the Divine Intellect, yet we are justified in attributing immutability, universality, and necessity to first principles, as well as to mathematical truths. For we first look upon them objectively, in their metaphysical light, according to which they are invariable as corresponding to the immutable reasons in God. And no ignorance, no blindness, no insanity or forgetfulness can alter the extrinsic rule and truth of things. In the second place, with regard to fundamental verities and principles there is such an easy perception of them in men, and there is so great an agreement in all, and so strong a conviction and vivid evidence in each, that the human mind becomes strictly conformable to the truth of things, and formal or logical truth coincides with metaphysical truth. Nevertheless this coincidence has

not the same character of necessity and immutability, as is found in the eternal reasons of God. Probably this is the cause why there have been found men who have maintained universal scepticism; why some have called into question even the principle of contradiction, though St. Thomas has thought it impossible to do so in earnest;¹ why some have eliminated from the sphere of certainty everything except Self. The very circumstances therefore of necessity, universality, eternity, and immutability with which we apprehend first principles and evident truths have a diminished form in our minds: 'Diminutæ sunt veritates a filiis hominum.' For the adjuncts of a truth follow the nature of the truth; and the truth in man being created and finite, its accessories partake of the same contraction. 'Necessarium significat *quendam modum veritatis*. Verum autem secundum Philosophum vi. Metaph. (text viii.) est in intellectu. Secundum hoc igitur vera et necessaria sunt æterna, quia sunt in intellectu æterno, qui est Intellectus Divinus solus: unde non sequitur quod aliquid extra Deum sit æternum.'² This he says in answer to the objection: '*Omne necessarium est æternum*, sed multa sunt necessaria, sicut omnia principia demonstrationis.' The objective or metaphysical truth then

¹ In Posterior i. lect. 19. Aristotle says the same in Metaph. iv. 3, accounting for the scepticism of Heraclitus. Perhaps what is impossible *directly*, may be possible, *indirectly*, to a school in which all is phenomenal. Conf. Conimbric. loc. cit. p. 298.

² Sum. I. x. 3 ad 3.

is necessary and eternal. But the subjective truth in finite beings cannot have the same necessity or eternity, since the *mode* must follow the nature of the truth. Hamilton expresses his surprise that before Leibnitz there are not found those who clearly 'enounce necessity as the criterion of truth native to the mind.'¹ Yet he had said in the same context, that 'all necessity is in fact to us subjective; for a thing is conceived impossible only as we are unable to construe it in thought.'² To us it seems that St. Thomas does speak of necessity and universality, but that he adapts these expressions, and such as are similar, to the finite capacities of men. A passage partly adduced before will illustrate our statement. 'Quia solus Intellectus Divinus est æternus, *in ipso solo veritas æternitatem habet . . . Ratio circuli, et duo et tria esse quinque, habet æternitatem in Mente Divina . . . Aliquid esse semper et ubique potest intelligi dupliciter. Uno modo quia habet in se, unde se extendat ad omne tempus et ad omnem locum, sicut Deo competit esse ubique et semper. Alio modo quia non habet in se quo determinetur ad aliquem locum vel tempus . . . Et per hunc modum* (that is, the

¹ Vol. ii. p. 195, words in the margin giving his sense.

² In the Appendix, however, Hamilton with reason distinguishes the *objective* necessity from the *subjective*. He thinks the Aristotelic necessity was properly the former, or at least a confusion of the two. The first alternative shows that metaphysical necessity was not confounded with human certainty; but regarded perhaps as correlative to divine certitude, since Aristotle represents God as the sovereign Intelligence.

indeterminate, not infinite) *quodlibet universale dicitur esse ubique et semper*, in quantum universalia abstrahuntur ab hic et nunc. Sed ex hoc *non sequitur ea esse æterna nisi in intellectu, si quis sit æternus.*¹

We are brought therefore to the inference that here also the accessory follows the principal, and all properties of truth follow the nature of that truth, and cannot exceed it; in the Divine Intellect they are absolute, in the human mind they are conditioned, finite, and proportional.² While metaphysical truth or the truth of the Divine Intelligence remains the same, formal truth in man is changeable, from the variation of one of the two extremes of the relation, of the intellect or of the things. ‘Veritas Divini Intellectûs est immutabilis; veritas autem intellectûs nostri mutabilis est.’³ And in his Treatise Contra Gentes⁴ he seems to speak almost prophetically against the errors of modern Ontologism. ‘Quod vero objicitur de æternitate veritatis quam intelligit anima, considerare oportet quod intellectæ veritatis æternitas potest intelligi dupliciter. Uno modo, quantum *ad id quod intelligitur*, alio modo quantum *ad id quo intelligitur.*’ This is the difference which we have noticed between

¹ Sum. I. xvi. Conf. also I. x. 3 ad 3, where the objection not denied says, ‘multa sunt necessaria, sicut omnia principia demonstrationis.’

² Liberatore in his later edition, in which he approaches more closely to St. Thomas, has the following proposition:—‘Certitudo mentis per se *proportionalis* est etiam *essentiæ subjecti intelligentis*, et *lumi*ni sub quo objectis adhæretur.’ Vol. i. p. 105.

³ Ibid. next art.

⁴ Lib. ii. ch. 84.

objective or metaphysical truth, and subjective or formal truth. The one regards the things themselves, though ulteriorly the mind of God, the other regards the intellect which apprehends, whether it be the increate or created. He proceeds, 'Et si quidem veritas intellecta sit æterna quantum ad id quod intelligitur sequitur æternitas rei quæ intelligitur non autem intelligentis. Si autem veritas intellecta sit æterna *quantum ad id quo intelligitur* (as it is in the comprehension of God, and as it is not in any finite intelligence by nature) sequetur intelligentem animam esse æternam. Sic *autem veritas intellecta non est æterna*, sed primo modo; ex præmissis enim patet species intelligibiles, quibus anima nostra intelligit veritatem, *de novo nobis advenire* ex phantasmatibus per intellectum agentem.'

22 DE 68

It appears to us that we have in the preceding pages endeavoured to account for those chief difficulties which surround the Peripatetic doctrine of the sources of our knowledge; and that by meeting the very objections which have attended our own study of the subject, we have probably availed to throw some light on the obscurities which others have found, who are inclined to the views of St. Thomas, but desire to see the entire circle of his connected exposition. The desire is just, for truth revolves upon itself.